



**Superior Court of the State of California
In and For The County of Placer
Roseville, California**

10820 JUSTICE CENTER DRIVE, ROSEVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95678
P. O. BOX 619072, ROSEVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95661

COURT EXECUTIVE OFFICE
(916) 408-6186 FAX (916) 408-6188

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Court Executive Office
(916) 408-6186

**PLACER SUPERIOR COURT SEEKS COMMENT ON PROPOSAL TO
IMPLEMENT TIERED CHILD CUSTODY MEDIATION AND HIGHLIGHTS
RECENT CHANGES TO ITS FAMILY LAW PROCESSES AND SERVICES**

The Placer County Superior Court is seeking comment on a proposal to transition from a child custody recommending counseling mediation model to a tiered mediation model in all cases involving contested child custody and visitation matters.

The court is considering a move to a tiered mediation model consisting of three tiers. In Tier I, the parties would work with a mediator in an effort to come to an agreement in their case. That mediation would be confidential and not result in any recommendation or report to the court. For those who are unable to reach agreement, the court could order further services by referral to Tier II or Tier III. In Tier II, a court-connected professional would gather information and submit a report, without recommendations, to the court. Tier III serves as a traditional child custody recommending counseling service, in which a report, with recommendations, would be provided to the court. Cases would initially be referred to Tier I, and the judicial officer would have the discretion to refer cases to subsequent tiers or child custody evaluation as needed.

The proposed model is intended to provide parties with additional opportunities to resolve conflict and to promote the best interest of the child prior to court hearings. "By expanding our family court mediation services to include tiered mediation, we hope to help children and families by reducing conflict and adversarial court hearings whenever possible," said Alan V. Pineschi, Presiding Judge of the Placer County Superior Court.

Further details of the proposed model are posted in the court's Proposed Local Rules for July 1, 2017. These proposed rules, and information on how to submit comments to the court on the proposed rule changes, can be found at: <http://www.placer.courts.ca.gov/local-rules.html>.

The proposed transition to a tiered mediation model is the latest in a series of efforts by the court to improve services for court users in family law and civil cases.

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In August of 2016, the court's Legal Help Center staff began preparing orders after hearing in the courtroom for self-represented litigants attending family court hearings. This allows the parties to leave the courthouse with formal orders in hand. This expanded service intends to reduce ambiguity the parties may otherwise have related to orders made in their court hearing.

In September of 2016, at the Gibson Courthouse in Roseville, the court began offering advance appointments online for some services in the Family Law Division, Civil Division, and the Legal Help Center to reduce wait times for court users. One court user who scheduled an advance appointment for the family law filing window shared, "online appointments are awesome, and I love it." To schedule an advance appointment online, please visit the Online Services page of the court's website, under Online Appointments: <http://www.placer.courts.ca.gov/online-services.html>.

In January of 2017, the court implemented a revamped Family Centered Case Resolution program. Upon filing a petition for Dissolution, Legal Separation, Nullity, or Parentage, the court will schedule three (3) status conferences, six (6), twelve (12), and eighteen (18) months after filing. The staggered status conferences are intended to assist litigants toward a timely disposition. For more information, please visit the corresponding section on the Family Law & Support FAQ page of the court's website: <http://www.placer.courts.ca.gov/forms/family/FCCR%20Public%20FAQ.pdf>.

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